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The Cabotian Discovery

By JOHN BOYD THACHER

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VIII.—*The Cabotian Discovery.*

By John Boyd Thacher.

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A people may acquire territory by discovery, by conquest, by purchase. Title by discovery is said to be original. Title by conquest or by purchase is said to be derivative. In the law of nations the title of discovery confers sovereignty. It recognizes the warrant to extinguish the rights of native occupants by conquest or by purchase. Sovereignty which is shared can not be real sovereignty. To be real it must be exclusive. Whenever, in the progress of civilization, new conditions have been introduced, the nations have almost immediately formulated some principle to govern those conditions and their consequences. The principle has been announced and accepted before consequences could bring dispute or disaster. In the nation itself, among the individuals, disputes or disasters have preceded laws. But in the family of nations certain new and unfamiliar conditions have suggested the possibility of certain effects or events, to guard against which laws, written or unwritten, have been proposed and allowed. With the discovery of the new world this principle was established. It is true that before the middle of the 15th century, two Popes had authorized Spain to send expeditions westward and Portugal to make discoveries to the southward, and it is true that Alexander VI., in 1493, drew a line from north to south, one hundred leagues west of the Azores (subsequently increased by treaty to three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde islands), and gave to Spain whatsoever lands she might first discover west of that line; but it is also true that, in after time, Spain presented as her strongest title to new territory the abstract fact of prior discovery, and not the authority of the papal bull.

Discoveries have generally been made by expeditions sailing under the directions and authority of some European nation, and the first ceremonious act of the discoverer has been to plant upon the strange shore the standard of his country. Thus, Columbus, immediately upon landing on Watling Island, unfurled the royal banner of Spain and took possession for the king and queen. A discovery made by a private person, in the prosecution of a private enterprise, would bestow sovereignty on the nation to which he held fealty. That discovery would exclude any other individual, or any other nation, from the possession of that territory. After a land has once been seen by a discoverer, whether voyaging for his king or for himself, whether equipped with a royal warrant or sailing upon his own adventure, it is manifest that it can no longer be

discoverable. Its title is forever pre-empted, and will be sustained by the law of nations.

Title by discovery is so strong that it is not necessarily abrogated by failure to occupy and colonize. An unoccupied island may be seized by an expedition and be held until a standard or monument is found, or until some other proof of prior discovery is presented, and then, according to the usage of nations, possession must be given to the discoverer. A failure to occupy is presumptive evidence of abandonment, but this presumptive proof would yield as against positive proof of first discovery. One may question the moral right of a man to possess land which he will neither occupy himself nor allow another to occupy, but if his legal title is good the state guarantees him possession. Morally, a great nation ought not to claim territory it can not or will not occupy, but the waving of a piece of bunting from a single flagstaff will secure title in the court of nations.

On the acquisition of territory in America, the principle was declared that discovery by a European or civilized nation extinguished the rights of the native and heathen occupants of that territory. Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland, each heartily accepted this principle. The United States, as holder of derivative titles from these nations, claims exclusive power to extinguish the right of occupancy possessed by the Indians. If it were to be held that the right of occupancy conferred upon the Indians the right to sell their property, then the tribes still living could convey their title to lands in New York and in other states to Great Britain. The latter being a civilized state, with an active and competent government, could then proceed to introduce its laws, customs and practices into such lands in New York and other states as it might acquire from the Indians. We at once see the absurdity of arguing that any absolute, complete and exclusive right to territory can reside in the Indians. The exclusive right to the territory, within its borders, belongs to the United States to-day, just as it belonged to Spain, and England, and France, when they discovered it.

Another principle adopted by the nations was that the title of the discoverer should not be confined to the exact spot or place visited, but might be extended to contiguous territory. The discovery of a part of an island covered a claim to the whole island. No one would have disputed the claim of Spain to the whole island of Cuba, although it was not circumnavigated until after the death of Columbus. The discovery of the mouth of a river generally covered with a vested interest the region watered by it, even to its source, and often including its affluents. Finally the principle was adopted that the discovery of a specific domain upon the east coast of North America should give title to a continuous territory running westward to the Pacific ocean. These principles were adopted in council and applied in war. In the treaty made at Paris, in the year 1763, and which terminated a long and bitter war, England's

claim to territory westward from the Atlantic coast was limited to the middle of the Mississippi river. The claim of England was original title by discovery long prior to French occupation. The claim of France was discovery of a limited coast, strengthened by explorations and settlements. France ceded to England Acadie and all Canada. England ceded to France all her possessions from the Mississippi to the Pacific ocean. Each nation parted with something it believed it owned, and each nation received something from a hand which it regarded as entitled to affix the seal of conveyance.

We have thus endeavoured to sketch the significance of discovery as affecting the title of the discoverer to territory in the new world. Mere curiosity or antiquarian interest would not justify me in preparing, or you in listening to, a lecture on the first English westward voyages. The owner of a manor, at least once in his life-time, draws forth the deeds of his estate and studies with care the title they confer. You and I,—you of Canada and I of the States,—are citizens and part owners of the fairest domain on all the earth. When we study the first westward sailings of hardy English navigators we are only reading the title deeds to our own beloved countries.

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It is an October day in London, in the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and ninety-seven. It is morning, but not yet noon. Thames street, on the north side of the river, from which it takes its name, is gay with throngs of slow promenaders and busy with swiftly passing men who go about affairs. They pass by the residences of the rich, the houses of the prosperous merchants and of great lords, for we are on the upper part of the street and beyond where Chaucer's father once had his wine shop. Stately barges move up and down the river, disdaining on their way the innumerable smaller craft which contribute to the action of the scene. On the broad way between the river and the part occupied by the pedestrians are gayly dressed horsemen, knights, soldiers and esquires, while now and then there passes a lady fair on a white palfrey. The martial spirit is not abroad. Lancaster is king and he fights no more. All who travel this London street to-day seem bright in colours and rich in garments. These garments are made of the rainbow. Every hue that cloth and light can assume attracts the eye. Scarlet, purple, Lincoln green, coventry blue, glittering cloth of gold, flash in and out of the throng like threads in a variegated garment. It already is twenty years and more since Parliament was petitioned against the inordinate display of apparel by men and women, but the matter has grown worse and nothing better. Laws have been made providing dress for degrees and stations. No knight, unless he be a lord of great degree, may wear a stomacher worked in gold or sable, nor may purple cloth of silk cross his shoulders. No girdle nor dagger can be worn save its wearer hath twenty pounds of

yearly income. Nor may a yoeman pad his doublet after the manner of knightly dress, under penalty of fine. But the spirit of the time is too splendid to be repressed. Trade with the continent and the far east has bred elegance. Cunning artificers work in gold and silver and copper. Linen comes from Flanders and Brabant. France sends her velvets and Venice her embroideries. The further nations bring damasks and silks and satins. Husbandry is dying. It is the age of the artificer.

Splendour and richness, after all, are relative. There are degrees even to the stars. And there is now passing a figure which catches every eye and halts every step. Tall and commanding in form, broad of shoulder, dignified and calm. His beard and hair are long and white like snow. He wears a doublet of purple velvet, and inside and on the border is ermine like his beard. The doublet is laced up in front and the sleeves are puffed and slashed to display a shirt of the finest lawn, and the lacing is of silver and the fastenings are of gilt. His hat is made to match his dress and sits upon his head as if a crown. His hose is puffed and slashed like the sleeves of his doublet, and his stockings are of embroidered silk. His shoes are broad in the toes and mark the new fashion coming in from the land of France. Around his neck is a broad chain of brightest gold, and about his waist is a girdle of silver from which hang a purse of velvet and a dagger in a sheath of red. At his side is carried a jewelled sword, a strange and foreign weapon. A servant walks behind, while at his side, but a step backward, to signify a lesser degree, is a companion or attendant. The passers-by do more than stare—they follow him and whisper among themselves. We hear them say, "It is he; it is the admiral; it is he who has found the new lands." This man, then, is John Cabot, but lately returned from his first voyage of discovery, and the companion at his side is his barber and favourite, upon whom, out of the riches of his new world, he has royally bestowed an island as a gift.

It is a glorious thing to recognize a great event and to honour him who contributes to its occurrence. But this glory is oftentimes a passing glory. Columbus once sat at dinner with a king, and then he sat alone in chains. The sun can give no security that the heavens will never obscure its face, and there is no form of human glory that is permanent and sure. The interesting figure before whom London is prostrating itself to-day is soon to have his fame obscured for nearly four hundred years and the curtain which will hide him is to be drawn by the hand of his own son.

The voyage of discovery we are now to consider was one said to have been made by John Cabot sailing from Bristol, England, in May, 1497, discovering land on the feast day of St. John the Baptist, June 24, and returning to England early in August of the same year. Before we engage in an attempt to describe this voyage and to disentangle threads of truth from the skein of misapprehension, it may be profitable to inquire

as to previous authentic transatlantic voyages. They are three in number, two by Christopher Columbus, made respectively in 1492 and 1493, and one by Americus Vespucius made in 1497. The first voyage of Columbus resulted in the discovery of the new world. The landfall is practically settled as having occurred on Watling Island, one of the Bahama group. After examining three others of this group and the large island of Cuba, Columbus established on the north side of the island of Santo Domingo, the first European settlement. The second voyage of Columbus opened to the world the lesser Antilles, the island of Guadalupe, Marigalante, Santa Cruz, Porto Rico, a large part of the island of Cuba, and returned the expedition to La Navidad, the settlement on Santo Domingo, only to find it a mass of ruins and not one soul living of the forty Europeans left there the previous year. Thus far only islands had been found, and no European foot had trodden on continental land. On the 10th day of May, in the year 1497, an expedition, of which Americus Vespucius was a member, sailed from Cadiz. In about ten days, or on May 20, it arrived at the Canaries, where it halted eight days. Departing about May 28, it reached continental land in thirty-seven days, which would land the expedition on July 4. In the record of the voyage given by Vespucius, he declares that the landfall was in 16 degrees north latitude and 75 degrees west of the Canaries, or at some point in the Gulf of Honduras. The Canaries were the fortunate isles of the time of Ptolemy, who began to count the degrees of longitude eastward from their meridian. Vespucius then made his way around the Gulf of Mexico, coasting always around the point of Florida, and so north as far as Cape Hatteras. It was the 15th of October, 1498, when the fleet of Vespucius returned to Spain. In his third voyage, begun in 1501, Vespucius reached about 52 degrees of south latitude, and I have on another occasion endeavoured to point out that while Columbus certainly is entitled to the honour the world willingly pays him as the first discoverer, negatively, at least, there is no great impropriety in having called the new world after Americus, since he explored and laid open some ninety degrees of its coast, or the fourth part of the earth's circle. It is evident that there is before us a serious dispute as to the priority of continental discovery. If Cabot found continental land on June 24, 1497, he preceded Vespucius by just ten days, and to England and not to Spain belongs the honour of this discovery.

The evidence upon which we must rely, in studying the Cabotian voyages, is neither satisfying nor conclusive. John Cabot has spoken no word, directly, to us as he passed. He has left no written memorandum of his voyage. Columbus kept an account of his voyage, in which he gave some information. Vespucius recorded a few important events as they occurred. But no paper or diurnal has come to us from John Cabot. The explorer, to-day, who goes to the "Farthest North" breathes over again in his journal his entire voyage. He gives to us the daily

latitude and longitude of his ship; the daily temperature of air and water; the drift of the ice and the force of the wind, and then he tells us when he had tapioca pudding for dinner, and when the orchestrion played the minuet from Don Juan. There are, however, a few contemporaneous documents which will throw some light on our inquiry. Perhaps the most satisfactory method to follow will be to consider the evidence in its chronological order, reserving for ourselves the right to turn aside, from time to time, and to venture into the fields of inference and speculation.

In the Public Record office in London are two documents, the first of which reads:

"To the Kyng our Souvereigne lord,—

"Please it your highness of your moste noble and haboundant grace to graunt vnto Iohn Cabotto, citezen of Venes, Lewes, Sebestyan and Sancto, his sonneys, your gracious lettres patentes vnder your grete seale in due forme to be made according to the tenour hereafter ensuying. And they shall during their lyves pray to God for the prosperous continuance of your moste noble and royale astate long to enduer."

To which the king, the Seventh Henry, made answer:

"Be it knowne that we haue giuen and granted, and by these presents do giue and grant for vs and our heires, to our welbeloued Iohn Cabot, citizen of Venice, to Lewis, Sebastian, and Santius, sonnes of the said Iohn, and to the heires of them, and euery of them, and their deputies, full and free authority, leaue, and power to saile to all parts, countries, and seas of the east, of the west, and of the north, under our banners and ensignes, with fiue ships of what burthen or quantity soeuer they be, and as many marines or men as they will haue with them in the sayd ships, vpon their owne proper costs and charges, to seeke out, discouer, and finde whatsoeuer isles, countries, regions or prouinces of the heathen and infidels whatsoeuer they be and in what part of the world soeuer they be, which before this time haue bene vnknowen to all Christians; we haue granted to them, and also to euery of them, the heires of them, and their deputies, and haue given them licence to set vp our banners and ensignes in euery village, towne, castle, isle, or maine land of them newly found. And that the aforesaid Iohn and his sonnes, or their heires and assignes may subdue, occupy and possesse all such townes, cities, castles and isles of them found, which they can subdue, occupy and possesse, as our vassals, and lieutenants, getting vnto vs the rule, title, and iurisdiction of the same villages, townes, castles, and firme land so found.

"Yet so that the aforesaid Iohn, and his sonnes and heires, and their deputies, be holden and bounden of all the fruits, profits, gaines, and

commodities growing of such nauigation, for euery their voyage, as often as they shall arriue at our port of Bristoll (at the which port they shall be bound and holden only to arriue) all manner of, necessary costs and charges by them made, being deducted, to pay vnto vs in wares or money the fift part of the capital gaine so gotten."

The document was executed at Westminster on March 5, 1496, in the eleventh year of the reign of King Henry VII. We find several interesting facts in this document. First, John Cabot is called a citizen of Venice. He was a citizen of Venice, but not a native. In 1472 the Doge Nicola Trono decreed that citizenship should be conferred on a foreigner only after a residence of fifteen consecutive years. In 1476 the privilege of citizenship was granted John Cabot. It was the custom to grant two degrees, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, two kinds of citizenship called "privilegium de intus," conferring privileges local in character, and to be enjoyed within the republic, and "privilegium de extra," conferring certain commercial rights beyond the republic, and the privilege of sailing under the flag of St. Mark. The citizenship conferred upon John Cabot included both these degrees or kinds. It was the duty of an official to write opposite the name of the applicant for citizenship the country and place of his nativity. Unfortunately, the imperfectly kept records in Venice do not disclose the original nationality either of John Cabot or of several other recipients of these privileges, whose names occur near to his own as recorded in the great "Book of Privileges." The entries disclose that names were inserted at times where blank spaces occurred. Thus the six names previous to that of John Cabot are recorded as receiving their privileges in the year 1484, while Cabot's name is recorded under the year 1476. Moreover, while every other name is recorded with the full date of year and month and day, Cabot's name has only the year. Therefore, it is conspicuous in an imperfect list as the most imperfectly recorded, although it is also conspicuous as the only name of the list remembered to-day in history. Henri Harrisse, the foremost authority on early American discoveries, and whom, for a certain distance at least, every student must follow, believes that John Cabot was, like Columbus, a native of Genoa. The Spanish ambassador, De Puebla, who was employed to arrange the match between Catherine of Aragon and Prince Arthur, and who lived in London for many years, repeatedly in despatches referred to Cabot as "another Genoese like Columbus." Another Spanish diplomatist, De Ayala, who had been sent a few years before to the king of Portugal, in reference to the line of demarcation established by Alexander VI., in May, 1493, three several times alludes to John Cabot as having been born in Genoa. These particular witnesses were trained diplomatic agents, and trained diplomatic agents are likely to be exact when communicating news to their own courts.

Next we find that John Cabot has associated with him as grantees his three sons, Lewis, Sebastian and Santius, and we infer three circumstances :

First, that Sebastian was his second son ;

Second, that he was arrived at his majority ; and,

Third, that he was a Venetian citizen.

The first conclusion is natural, from the order in which they are named, Lewis probably being the eldest of the three, and Santius the youngest. These two sons we never meet again. The second conclusion is based upon the usual practice of not making minors parties to a contract. This grant was a contract. If the king agreed to give Cabot and his sons certain powers and authorities, they agreed on their part to give the king certain prospective fruits, profits and gains. If these sons had been minors, the grant would have been made to "John Cabot, his heirs and deputies." Instead, they are recognized as equally capable of receiving and imparting benefits as the father himself. If, then, all three sons have arrived at their majority, Sebastian, the second son, must have been at least twenty-two years of age. This brings us by a logical step to our third conclusion, that Sebastian was a Venetian. If he was twenty-two years of age in 1497, he was born as early as 1475; and if he was born as early as 1475, his father, with his family, was living in Venice, his fifteen years of probationary residence not having been completed until the following year, 1476. When the republic adopted John Cabot, it adopted his sons, and it is probable, from certain contemporaneous references, that his wife was herself a Venetian woman. Peter Martyr, whom we are soon to meet, and who knew Sebastian Cabot intimately, declares that the latter told him he was born in Bristol, but taken by his father, at an early age, to Venice, and later returned to England. To offset this witness, the Venetian Ambassador (Contarini) who had an important interview with Sebastian Cabot on the 30th of December, 1522, the next day reported to his government that Sebastian had said to him, "To tell everything to your lordship, I was born in Venice, but was brought up (nutrito) in England." There is an official tone in this statement which makes it quite credible. Moreover, in the year 1501, King Henry, in a grant to another expedition, referred to the Cabots as *extranei* or foreigners, making use of the plural form, and thus including Sebastian as well as the father. Thus we see that while the expedition was sailing under English authority, and while the discovery was to be made under English auspices, the discoverer or discoverers were Venetian citizens, and, therefore, we shall not wonder when we behold John Cabot fixing in the earth of the new world, next to the banner of St. George with the Dragon, the standard of St. Mark with the Lion.

We find from this document that Cabot and his sons were to make the voyage "upon their own proper costs and charges," and we may infer

that John Cabot, if he was "another Genoese" like Columbus, was not impecunious like Columbus, and we can understand that he had a right upon his return from the new world, to dress in purple and fine linen—also probably "at his own proper costs and charges."

Another important fact learned from this document is that the expedition was limited in its powers of discovery; it was authorized to sail to the "East, the West, the North; to seek out, discover and finde whatsoever isles, countries, regions or provinces of the heathen and infidels whatsoever they be, and in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknowne to all Christians." It might not sail to countries whither Spain had been. It might not find regions to which Portugal had gone before. It had no warrant to go to the South. Thus, in a royal grant, did King Henry accept the principles already announced, and which had already become a law of the nations, that discovery of new territory by a Christian people gave a title which another Christian people must observe and honour. This document reveals to us the very fabric of the dream which the Venetian wove for the king. The expedition is to set up the king's banners and ensigns in every town, city and castle. What did Cabot and the king think to find in the heathen lands? They were drawn by the same load stone which had drawn Columbus. They looked for the islands of the Blessed, for the island of the good St. Brandon, for the Seven Cities, for Cathay, for towns with streets of gold and battlements of shining metal, for precious stones, for costly silks, for rarest spices. They sought the kingdom of the Grand Cham. John Cabot had once been to Mecca, if what he told was truth, and in the far east he had seen innumerable caravans returning from a further east, and the tales that were told were like the spices they bore, fragrant with a strange perfume. Cabot was a Venetian, and he might have told the king that for two hundred years the children of Venice had heard the wondrous story of how one day there came back to Venice three men who had been gone long years and had returned from the province of the Great Cham, and how these men were in rags and in apparent sore distress, and, then, how having won the pity of their friends and neighbours, they took knives and sharp daggers and tore away the seams of their frayed garments, letting fall upon the floor diamonds and pearls, emeralds, sapphires and rubies, until the richest Venetian stood poor before them. And the king remembered in the days before he went to war, that he too had read of Marco Polo and of his father and of his uncle. A king hath an appetite and a longing, even as hath a man without a sceptre, and King Henry was hungry and avaricious beyond any of England's kings. Cabot found a new land, but he found neither castle nor city; and if there was prophecy in the dream of the king, it was not to be fulfilled in far Cathay.

There is one more item of interest in this document of the grant. John Cabot and his sons were to "be holden and bounden of all the

fruits, profits and gaines, and commodities growing of such nauigation, for euery their voyage, as often as they shall arrive at our port of Bristoll, (at the which port they shall be bound and holden only to arriue.") For centuries Bristol has been famous for its nautical enterprises. Its merchants had traded for years before the period of which we are speaking, with Iceland, and Columbus himself is said to have gone in a Bristol ship, in the year 1477, to a point one hundred leagues beyond, i. e., to the westward of the island of Thyle. It was a Bristol ship which brought back to civilization Juan Fernandez, the Robinson Crusoe of De Foe. Here was built the famous "Arethusa" of song and story, the saucy frigate which beat the four French sail in the English channel :

> The fight was off the Frenchman's land,
> We drove them back upon their strand ;
> For we fought until not a stick would stand
> Of the gallant Arethusa.

The "Great Western" was built here, and was the first steamship to make the western transatlantic voyage. As Bristol was the first city in England to send a ship to the shores of America, so she was the first English city to establish steam communication with the western hemisphere. There is said to be in the hands of a Bristol bookseller an ancient manuscript which for several generations, at least, had been in the possession of a neighbouring family. It purports to give, in the form of a chronicle, an account of happenings in Bristol. Under date of the year 1497, is said to be the following passage :

"This year, on St. John the Baptist's day the land of America was found by the merchants of Bristowe in a ship of Bristol called the Matthew, the which said ship departed from the port of Bristowe the 2nd of May, and came home again the 6th of August following."

It is plain that this entry was not contemporaneous, for America was not baptised until 1507, and its name was not generally accepted until the middle of the 16th century. If the manuscript is genuine, and if it was contemporaneous, or sufficiently so as to come within the testimony of eye-witnesses, it would be of the greatest importance, for no document or witness suggests the exact date of the discovery until the year 1544. It is generally believed that this particular manuscript belongs to a famous group of Bristolian manuscripts, dating two hundred years after the discovery of America, but pretending to great antiquity. When we speak of rare and ancient Bristol manuscripts, our minds immediately revert to the strange career of Thomas Chatterton, who produced the famous Rowley forgeries and deceived the very elect of English antiquarians. Mr. William Barrett published : "The History and Antiquities of the city of Bristol, compiled from original records and authentic manuscripts in public offices or private hands." He

hands." He quotes from this manuscript in private hands as follows: "In the year 1497, the 24th of June, on St. John's day, was Newfoundland found by Bristol men, in a ship called the Matthew." The phraseology differs from the quotation as made by the Bristol bookseller, and the land discovered is denominated Newfoundland. This William Barrett was the employer, friend, and confident of Chatterton, and it was to him that Chatterton consigned his manuscript.

Although the grant was made as early as March 5, in the year 1496, the expedition did not sail until the beginning of summer in the following year. Even in these days of despatch and experience, months and years are consumed in equipping and preparing an adventurous journey. Therefore, we are not surprised that more than a year passed before the ship from Bristol spread its sails toward the beckoning west.

The next chronological stone in the structure of our story, is a document preserved among the manuscripts in the British Museum, and which contains the account of the king's privy purse. Under date of August 10, in the 12th year of Henry VII., which is the year of our Lord 1497, is this item:

To hym who founde the new isle, L. 10.

This has always been interpreted as a voluntary award to John Cabot by King Henry, for having discovered this new territory. It was voluntary, because no award was denominated in the bond. The discovery must have created a wild excitement in England, and the entry indicates that even the king was excited, and gave to the discoverer, from his privy purse, the munificent sum of ten pounds. This Henry practised such frugalities in his own expenses, that his coffers groaned with the burden of their deposits. Hume tells us that reckoning silver at thirty-seven shillings and six-pence a pound, the hoardings of the king, consisting of one million eight hundred thousand pounds, were not less in value in the time of Hume than three millions of pounds. But this king, though he heaped up great treasures, was no mean prince. Francis Bacon called him the Solomon of England.

We learn from this entry in the king's privy purse that the expedition had returned by the 10th day of August in the same year of its departure. It must have returned to the port of Bristol several days prior to the 10th of August, perhaps a week before, and John Cabot hurried across to London to report to the king. What report did he bear to Henry?

Venice in the 15th century had its commercial agents in every capital in Europe. Its great commercial houses employed representatives and correspondents abroad. Commerce and diplomacy had brought to London quite a Venetian colony. One of its regular agents, a certain Lorenzo Pasqualigo wrote a letter home to his brothers, Alvise and Fran-

cesco, under date of August 23, 1497. In it he announces the return of the expedition and gives us the first tidings of its discoveries :

"The Venetian, our countryman, who went with a ship from Bristol in quest of new islands, is returned, and says that 700 leagues hence he discovered land, the territory of the Grand Cham (Gram Cam). He coasted for 300 leagues and landed; saw no human beings, but he had brought hither to the king certain snares which had been set to catch game, and a needle for making nets ; he also found some felled trees, wherefore he supposed there were inhabitants, and returned to his ship in perplexity.

" He was three months on the voyage, and on his return he saw two islands to starboard, but would not land, time being precious, as he was short of provisions. He says that the tides are slack and do not flow as they do here. The King of England is much pleased with this intelligence.

" The king has promised that in the spring our countryman shall have ten ships, armed to his order, and at his request has conceded him all the prisoners, except such as are confined for high treason, to man his fleet. The king has also given him money wherewith to amuse himself till then, and he is now at Bristol with his wife, who is also a Venetian, and with his sons ; his name is Juan Cabot, and he is styled the great admiral. Vast honour is paid him ; he dresses in silk, and these English run after him like mad people, so that he can enlist as many of them as he pleases, and a number of our own rogues besides.

"The discoverer of these places planted on his new found land a large cross, with one flag of England and another of St. Mark, by reason of his being a Venetian, so that our banner has floated very far afield."

At the same time there was in London, as an ambassador from Ludovico Sforza, called the Moor, the usurping Duke of Milan, whose evil fortune was soon to turn over his kingdom for a few years to the French crown, a certain Raimondo di Soncino. He was a faithful servant and correspondent, and kept his master well informed on passing events in England. He wrote a letter on August 24, 1497, the very day after Pasqualigo wrote to his brother. I quote a passage from this:

" Also some months ago his majesty sent out a Venetian, who is a very good mariner, and has good skill in discovering new islands, and he has returned safe, and has found two very large and fertile new islands ; having likewise discovered the seven cities, 400 leagues from England, on the western passage. This next spring his majesty means to send him with fifteen or twenty ships."

This letter is followed with one dated December 14, 1497, which is of even more importance :

" Most Illustrious and Excellent My Lord :

"Perhaps among your excellency's many occupations, it may not displease you to learn how his majesty here has won a part of Asia with-

out a stroke of the sword. There is in this kingdom a Venetian fellow, Master John Caboto by name, of fine mind, greatly skilled in navigation, who, seeing that those most serene kings, first he of Portugal, and then the one of Spain, have occupied unknown islands, determined to make a like acquisition for his majesty aforesaid. And having obtained royal grants that he should have the usufruct of all that he should discover, provided that the ownership of the same is reserved to the crown, with a small ship and eighteen persons he committed himself to fortune; and having set out from Bristol, a western port of this kingdom, and passed the western limits of Hibernia, and then standing to the northward, keeping (after a few days) the north star on his right hand; and having wandered about considerably, at last he fell in with terra firma, where, having planted the royal banner and taken possession on behalf of this king, and taken certain tokens, he has returned thence. The said Master John, as being foreign born and poor, would not be believed if his comrades, who are almost all Englishmen from Bristol, did not testify that what he says is true. This Master John has the description of the world in a chart, and also in a solid globe, which he has made, and it shows where he landed, and that going toward the east he passed considerably beyond the country of the Tanais. And they say that it is a very good and temperate country, and they think that brazil wood and silks grow there; and they affirm that that sea is covered with fishes, which are caught not only with the net, but with baskets, a stone being tied to them in order that the baskets may sink in the water. And this I heard the said Master John relate, and the aforesaid Englishmen, his comrades, say that they will bring so many fishes that this kingdom will no longer have need of Iceland, from which country there comes a very great store of fish which are called stock-fish. But Master John has set his mind on something greater; for he expects to go farther on toward the east (Levant) from that place already occupied, constantly hugging the shore, until he shall be over against an island, by him called Cipango, situated in the equinoctial region, where he thinks all the spices of the world, and also the precious stones, originate; and he says that in former times he was at Mecca, whither spices are brought by caravans from distant countries, and that those who brought them, on being asked where the said spices grow, answered that they do not know, but that other caravans come to their homes with this merchandise from distant countries, and these again say that they are brought to them from other remote regions. And he argues thus, that if the orientals affirmed to the southerners that these things come from a distance from them, and so from hand to hand, presupposing the rotundity of the earth, it must be that the last ones get them at the north toward the west; and he said it in such a way, that, having nothing to gain or lose by it, I, too, believe it; and what is more, the king here, who is wise and not lavish, likewise

puts some faith in him; for (ever) since his return he has made good provision for him, as the same Master John tells me. And it is said that, in the spring, his majesty aforenamed will fit out some ships, and will, besides, give him all the convicts, and they will go to that country to make a colony, by means of which they hope to establish in London a greater storehouse of spices than there is in Alexandria; and the chief men of the enterprise are men of Bristol, great sailors, who, now that they know where to go, say that it is not a voyage of more than fifteen days, nor do they ever have storms after they get away from Hibernia. I have also talked with a Burgundian, a comrade of Master John's, who confirms everything, and wishes to return thither because the admiral (for so Master John already entitles himself) has given him an island; and he has given another one to a barber of his from Castiglione-of-Genoa, and both of them regard themselves as counts; nor does my lord the admiral esteem himself anything less than a prince. I think that with this expedition there will go several poor Italian monks, who have all been promised bishoprics. And, as I have become a friend of the admiral's, if I wished to go thither I should get an archbishopric. But I have thought that the benefices which your excellency has in store for me are a surer thing; and, therefore, I beg that if these should fall vacant in my absence, you will cause possession to be given to me, taking measures to do this rather (especially) where it is needed, in order that they may not be taken from me by others, who, because they are present, can be more diligent than I, who, in this country, have been brought to the pass of eating ten or twelve dishes at every meal, and sitting at table three hours at a time twice a day, for the sake of your excellency, to whom I humbly commend myself.

"Your Excellency's

"Very humble servant,

"RAIMUNDUS."

On the 13th day of December, 1497, a pension of twenty pounds per annum is granted by King Henry VII. to John Cabot, and the customs and subsidies of the port of Bristol are charged with the payment of the same.

On the 3rd day of February, in the 13th year of Henry VII., 1498, a second royal grant was made, the original of which is preserved in the Public Record office in London. This grant is made to John Cabot alone, and no mention is made of Sebastian or of any of his sons. It grants "to our well-beloved John Cabot, Venetian, sufficient authority and power, that he by him his deputy or deputies sufficient, may take at his pleasure six English ships to any port or ports, or other place within this our realm of England or obeisance, so that and if the said ships be of the burden of two hundred tons or under, with their apparel requisite and necessary for the safe conduct of the said ship, and them

convey and lead to the land and isles of late found by the said John in our name and by our commandment."

In the privy purse account of Henry VII., preserved in the British Museum, and to which allusion has already been made, are the two following items, under date of March 22, 1498: To Launcelot Thirkill, of London, upon a Prest—present—for his ship going toward the new ilande, £20. Delivered Launcelot Thirkill, going toward the new ile, in Prest. £20.

Under date of April 1, 1498, are two other items: To Thomas Bradley and Launcelot Thirkill, going to new isle, £20. To John Carter going to the new isle in reward, £40 5 shilling.

We have before us now every contemporaneous account of the voyage of discovery. There are three other important printed documents to be consulted before we close our subject and pass final judgment, but these documents are not contemporaneous. The first is Peter Martyr's account of what Sebastian Cabot told him of the voyage, and which was first printed in 1516; the second is an engraved map, generally called Sebastian Cabot's own map, published first in 1544; the third is a gossipy account of a conversation between Sebastian Cabot and an anonymous Mantuan gentleman, first printed in Ramusio's "voyages," under the date of 1563. These three documents give us much information and much misinformation. They have served, when taken by themselves, to confuse the question of the discoverer and the discovery. Documents written or printed long after the occurrence of an event are dangerous authorities. The opportunity for chance or design to alter or modify earlier and contemporaneous statements, is too great to permit history to accept those statements without scrutiny and caution. Therefore, confining ourselves for the present to the contemporaneous accounts, the letter of the Venetian, Pasqualigo, and the two letters of Raimondo di Soncino, and the several state papers, we can get tolerably approximate bearings. We must remember that both Pasqualigo and Soncino knew John Cabot personally, while the latter says he became quite intimate with him. Two of the three descriptive letters were written the same month of Cabot's return, and the third was written in December of the same year. We are now in the possession of the following facts: First, the expedition consisted of one ship with eighteen men, under the charge of John Cabot, a Venetian citizen, and sailed from Bristol, England, in May, or three months previous to its return in August, under the authority and by the commandment of Henry VII., King of England. The expedition was seeking Cathay by going to the northwest. The course steered was north and west, and not at any time south. This information as to the starting point and as to the direction is of the utmost importance. The expedition, on sailing out from Bristol, passed the western limits of Ireland, and then began to steer to the north-

ward. Ireland runs almost directly north and south, its southernmost point being in 51 degrees and 26 minutes of north latitude; therefore, under any circumstances, the expedition never got further south than this line, unless it was pulled southwardly by some mysterious current or influence. The purpose of Cabot was to sail north of west. The account says: "Standing to the north, he began to steer eastward, keeping, after a few days, the north star on his right hand." Of course, you will understand the expression *eastward* is used for the Levant, which Cabot expected to reach by going westward until he arrived on its shores. Therefore, the expression is equivalent to saying that the course steered was first north and then west, keeping, after a few days, the north star on the right hand. Before voyages to the new world were undertaken, the natural course for a vessel going from England would be *east*, in which case the north star would be on the left hand, or *north*, in which case the north star would be just ahead, or *south*, in which case the north star would be directly behind. But here is a course going to the west, and the north star is on the right hand, a matter so unusual as to occasion special mention. There is an expression of great importance here. The north star did not get upon their right hand until "after some days." They sailed north after leaving Ireland, and, therefore, for some days the north star was directly ahead of them. After some days they turned to the west, and then the north star was on their right hand, and was kept on their right hand for the rest of the voyage. If a line were drawn due east and west from the southerly point of Ireland, it would very nearly strike on its western journey the extreme southerly point of Labrador, which point is washed by the Straits of Belle-isle. If, instead of drawing the line from the south end of Ireland, we draw it from the north end—and the account gives us the privilege of guessing at what point, after passing the westerly limits of Ireland, a northerly course was begun—the line would strike half way up the Labrador coast. If we allow Cabot about five degrees of northing beyond Ireland, his course would have taken him into Hudson's straits. The declination of the magnetic needle has been introduced by the scientists to further complicate this question. You will recall that consternation got hold of Columbus and his followers, when, on the broad Atlantic, the magnetic needle, instead of pointing a little east of the true or astronomical north, stood pointing directly north for a time and then deliberately began to veer around to the west. That has always seemed to me to be the most trying moment in the voyage of Columbus. He was sailing out into the sea of darkness, dreaded by the ancients. If the world were round, would there not be a place where the mighty ocean, the unknown seas, would rush down as into a vortex, drawing any ship which ventured within reach of its capacious maw! When, then, he found the magnetic needle, the one true, constant thing in nature, fickle and erratic, his heart must have quaked

within him. But the scientific soul asserted its sway, and he knew he was in a region where the needle varied a little to the west, as it had long been known in the old world to vary a little to the east. Columbus then discovered, not the magnetic variation of the needle, but its declination toward the west. John Cabot must have known of this phenomenon. It is popularly believed that Sebastian Cabot had discovered it for himself independently, and in ignorance of what Columbus had observed, and an elaborate calculation has been made, and an imaginary agonic line has been drawn by some scientists based on the supposed course of this first voyage, as laid down on the map of 1544. Columbus, upon his return from his first voyage, told of his own observation of the compass, and a fact like that, interesting and vital to all navigators, must have reached the ears of Cabot in a period of four years. Some of the most distinguished writers believe that while Cabot thought he was sailing due west, the declination of the needle drew him so far in a southerly direction as to land him on Cape Breton, several degrees south of Ireland. It must be remembered that during the first portion of the voyage, Cabot's vessel was subject to the easterly deviation of the compass, thus carrying him north of west, and this would probably balance or counteract the westerly deviation of the compass, to which the vessel may have been subjected during the latter portion of the voyage. It is nearly certain that Cabot was acquainted with the variation of the compass in Europe and the east, and that he was also informed of the experience of Columbus in finding its variation in western waters. Prof. Charles A. Schott, of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, perhaps the foremost authority in the world in this branch of scientific inquiry, writes me that he does not believe any useful argument can be based on suppositions involving the management of the compass by Cabot.

There are three places, or rather regions, which contend for the honour of first receiving the feet of the English discoverers. Cape Breton is one, and the most southerly of the three. It is an island. Newfoundland is another. It, also, is an island. Therefore, if Cabot landed on either of these sites and returned without further landing on the mainland, he could no more claim the honour of continental discovery than Columbus, when he landed on Watling Island. The third site is in the neighbourhood of the extreme north end of Labrador, near Cape Chudleigh.

We have a measurement given us in Pasqualigo's letter, which may aid us in this inquiry. You will recall he wrote to his brother on August 23, 1497, that "the Venetian, our countryman, who went with a ship from Bristol in quest of new islands, is returned, and says that 700 leagues hence he discovered land, the territory of the Grand Cham." If we can determine how far from Bristol, or, generally speaking, from England, the landfall was, we may be able to locate it with some degree

of assurance, or, at least, we may be able to assert of some particular claimant that it is *not* entitled to that honour. Pasqualigo was an Italian, and writing to his brother, who was also an Italian. When he reported that land had been found at a distance of 700 leagues, he evidently had in mind the Italian league, and this differed considerably from the English league. The Italian league was equal to four Italian miles. An Italian mile was equal to 4,842 feet, or less than a statute English mile by 438 feet. Thus we find that 700 Italian leagues would be equal to 2,568 English miles. Plotting a course of this length on a great globe and following due west a meridian, in which Bristol is situated, a vessel would pass into the Straits of Belle-isle, and reach the east end of Anticosti island. In other words a course of 2,568 miles from Bristol would carry a vessel far beyond the westerly end of Newfoundland. It is difficult to see how Cabot could have reached Cape Breton without seeing Newfoundland, unless he had been coming from the south. If he had first reached Newfoundland he would have discovered land at least 360 miles short of his 700 leagues. If we allow John Cabot a northing, after he left the west coast of Ireland, sufficient to have carried him to the 55th parallel, and then send him due west for 2,568 miles, he would strike the coast of Labrador somewhere near Maggarvick bay, but he would have been obliged to travel several hundred miles inland, or as far as Meshikeman lake, to have completed his 700 leagues. This course, however, on the 55th parallel, would have cleared the southern point of Greenland. If we carry Cabot as far north as the 60th parallel, and then bid him speed westward, his course of 2,568 would have taken him into Hudson straits, on the south side of Resolution island. But this course, if followed on a straight line, would have carried him on to the southern point of Greenland. Raimondo speaks of Cabot's having likewise seen, on his westward journey, at a distance of 400 leagues, the Seven Cities. It is possible that he had caught sight of land when at no great distance from Greenland, and had thought it to be the Seven Cities of legendary fame. If he had sailed not so far north as on a parallel with the southerly end of Greenland, and had kept somewhat south of Cape Farewell, he still might have been caught by the powerful currents which sweep around that point, and so up a ways into Davis straits. Thence sailing west he would have been carried into Hudson straits. In the second letter of Raimondo, he makes the Bristol sailors assert that "now they know the way, the voyage is not more than fifteen days." This is a story of the sailors, not of the careful and skilful navigator. A voyage of fifteen days for vessels of that period, is inconsistent with any transatlantic distance. There is a passage in this second letter which may strengthen this view of the northern landfall. Raimondo says: "But Master John has set his mind on something greater; for he expects to go farther on toward the east (that is toward the Levant) from that place already occupied, con-

stantly hugging the shore, until he shall be over against an island, by him called Cipango, situated in the equinoctial region, where he thinks all the spices of the world, and also the precious stones, originate." Hudson's straits presented to him a further opening to the Levant, and by hugging the shore he may have thought to have come out into the Levant, though certainly not in the equatorial regions. This was the purpose of the voyaging. To reach Cathay was his single object. He saw no human beings on this voyage, only certain tokens which indicated the presence of man, such as snares, a needle for making nets, and some felled trees. He saw abundant fishes, so that the sea seemed covered with them. It is said that at present the cod, which doubtless was the fish seen by Cabot, has its regular scheduled time for going northward up the coast, and that it is not due in northern Labrador until August 15, or at least a week after Cabot's supposed return. If it could be proved that the stockfish Cabot saw, observed, at the end of the 15th century, the same times and seasons of the cod of the present day, it would serve as a sound argument against the extreme northern landfall. "They say," continues Raimondo, "that it is a very good and temperate country, and they think that brazil-wood and silks grow there." This brazil-wood is a wood used for dyeing, and was known by that name in commerce long before the discovery of Brazil, the country. We have seen what use the gaily-dressed Englishmen made of richly-dyed garments, and the discovery of such a useful commodity would have meant much to them. But the brazil-wood, the cæsalpinia of botany, is not known north of the Tropic of Cancer, and there is no tree or shrub native to Greenland or Labrador, to Newfoundland or Cape Breton, which could possibly be mistaken for any species of that tree.

Pasqualigo reports that Cabot said the tides were slack, and did not flow as they did in England or in Bristol. This statement affords a very strong argument in favour of the Cape Breton landfall theory. The probable rise of tide on June 24, 1497, at Cape Breton Island, was 4½ feet, while it was 6½ feet at Cape Race, in Newfoundland, and 5 feet at Cape Chudleigh. As the probable rise of tide at Bristol was 37 feet, increasing in the spring of the year to forty feet, the conditions of the rise of the tide in the three sites in the new world would, in any one of them, attract the attention of the Bristol sailors. It was the velocity of the flood in the Bristol channel, and its apparent slackness in the new world, that occasioned Cabot's remark. In King Road, in the Bristol channel, the flood stream reaches a velocity of five knots per hour. At Cape Breton Island there is scarcely any tidal stream. In Gay strait, which is the passage between Cape Chudleigh and Britton islands, the average velocity of the tide reaches five knots per hour, as in the Bristol channel. The force of this argument is weakened by our uncertainty as to whether Cabot is speaking of his observation at the site of the landfall, or at some points of his subsequent explorations.

The account of Pasqualigo says that Cabot coasted for three hundred leagues. It seems impossible that Cabot could have sailed a distance from England of 2,568 miles, besides the uncertain wanderings and necessary tackings, explored 300 leagues, or over 1,100 miles of the coast, none of which distance could have been made at night, and made the return voyage all within the short period between the first part of May and the first part of August. It would have required a daily speed of seventy miles, accepting the date of the old but suspicious chronicle which gives May 2 as the day of departure and August 6 as the day of return.

Thus relying solely upon contemporaneous and apparently authentic documents, we think we may conclude that John Cabot, a Genoese by birth and a Venetian citizen by adoption, sailed from Bristol early in May, 1497, passing the westerly end of Ireland, sailed to the northward some days, and thereafter sailed to the westward, finding land at a distance from England of 700 Italian leagues, or 2,568 English miles, and that the land first seen was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Hudson's straits.

There was a second voyage, made in 1498, according to the letters patent granted John Cabot. The importance of this voyage was greater than the first, for it was the voyage of exploration. The immediate records of it are exceedingly meagre. In an old chronicle an entry is made of notable events under the London mayoralty of William Purchas, who held office from October 28, 1497, to October 28, 1498, and a reference is made to an expedition which "departed from the west country (Bristol) in the beginning of the somer, and of which is this maior's time returned no tidings." At all events, it establishes the fact of a second voyage, and gives us a frame into which to set the picture as it develops under the pencil of story and of legend.

And now we may examine the three later documents, which have had much to do with establishing the prevailing notions regarding Sebastian Cabot's part in the great event. There were several men of fame called Peter Martyr in the fifteenth century. One wrote on medicine, one wrote on religion, and one—our Peter Martyr—wrote on history. He had been the friend or associate of Columbus, Vespucius, Sebastian Cabot, Vasco de Gama, Magellan, and Cortes. He wrote a series of decades, or "De Rebus Oceanicis," publishing the first in 1511, the first, second and third together in 1516, and the entire eight decades in 1530. It is in the first three decades, published at Alcala, in 1516, that we find this story of Sebastian Cabot. It is written in Latin, and Hakluyt translated it into English, in 1589, in his "Principal Navigations." As I have compared this translation with the original Latin edition, and found it correct, and as students are commonly referred to Hakluyt for this and like translations, I have preserved it here with all its quaint phraseology.

"These North seas haue bene searched by one Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian borne, whom being yet but in maner an infant, his parents carried with them into England, hauing occasion to resort thither for trade of merchandise, as is the maner of the Venetians to leaue no part of the world vnsearched to obtaine riches. He therefore furnished two ships in England at his owne charges, and first with 300, men, directed his course so farre towards the North pole, that euen in the moneth of Iuly he found monstrous heapes of ice swimming on the sea, and in maner continuall day light, yet saw he the land in that tract free from ice, which had bene molten by the heat of the Sunne. Thus seeing such heapes of ice before him, he was enforced to turne his sailes and follow the West, so coasting still by the shore, that hee was thereby brought so farre into the South, by reason of the land bending so much Southwards, that it was there almost equall in Latitude, with the sea Fretum Herculeum, hauing the North pole eleuate in maner in the same degree. He sailed likewise in this tract so farre toward the West, that hee had the Island of Cuba on his left hand, in maner in the same degree of longitude. . . . . Sebastian Cabot himself named those lands Baccalaos, because that in the seas thereabout hee found so great multitudes of certaine bigge fishes much like vnto Tunies, (which the inhabitants called Baccalaos), that they sometimes stayed his ships. He found also the people of those regions couered with beastes' skinnes, yet not without the vse of reason. Hee also saieth there is great plentie of Beares in those regions which vse to eate fishe: for plunging themselues into the water, where they perceiue a multitude of these fishes to lie, they fasten their clawes in their scales, and so draw them to land and eate them, so (as he saieth) the Beares, being thus satisfied with fish, are not noisome to men. Hee declareth further, that in many places of these regions, hee saw great plentie of Laton (copper) among the inhabitants. Cabot is my very friend, whom I vse familiarlie, and delight to haue him sometimes keepe me companie in mine owne house. For being called out of England by the commandement of the Catholike king of Castile, after the death of king Henry, the seuenth of that name, king of England, he was made one of our counsell and Assistants, as touching the affaires of the new Indies, looking for ships daily to bee furnished for him to discouer this hid secret of Nature." "This vyage is appoynted to bee begunne in March in the yeare next folowynge, beinge the yeare of Chryst M.D.XVi. What shall succeade, youre holynes shal be advertised by my letters if god graunte me lyfe. Sume of the Spanyardes denye that Cabot was the fyrst fynder of the land of Baccallaos: And affirme that he went not so farre westwarde." [1]

[1] The last three sentences are found in the "third decade" of Peter Martyr printed at Alcala in 1516, and also in Richard Eden's English translation printed at London in 1555, but they are omitted by Hakluyt.

This, then, is our first introduction to Sebastian Cabot. We have made it clear that he was born in Venice, and that probably he was taken in early life to Bristol, which gave the foundation for a very natural story—that he was a Bristol man by birth. We find no record of his having been with his father on the first voyage, nor is there any contemporaneous record of his having been in charge of the second voyage of 1498. Henry VII. died in 1509, and the young king, Henry VIII., hastened to ally himself with King Ferdinand of Spain against Louis XII. of France. In the spring of 1512 Henry sent an expedition, under Lord Willoughby, into Spain, to aid his father-in-law with his struggles against the French king. Sebastian Cabot accompanied the expedition. He must have already acquired a name for himself, since we find King Ferdinand asking for his services. There are now records of his being called to court. He was appointed naval captain on the 20th of October, 1512. In the fall of 1515 he was created pilot to the king, and in 1518 he received his appointment as pilot major of Spain. This account of him, by Peter Martyr, was written in 1515, when Sebastian was officially associated with him and was his "familiar friend." So far as we can judge by the narrative, Peter Martyr, the historian, never heard of John Cabot, the discoverer. He never heard of a strange Venetian coming, year after year, from Bristol to London, following the court from Westminster to Woodstock, servilely seeking the acquaintance of the powerful, receiving rebuffs with the patience of a brave heart, sustaining the pain of misery with a calm mind, humbling himself before the great, putting each adversity behind him like a forgotten thing, unfolding ever his plans, exposing his hope to noble, to merchant, to seaman ; pushing further into confidence, rising higher into favour, until, at last, the king hearkens and the king grants. This was the work of years, and the man who writes the first history of the new world never hears his name! Sic vos non vobis!

From this story, told by Sebastian to Peter Martyr, we learn that he furnished two ships at his own charge, and, with three hundred men, sailed towards the north pole, and to such a high latitude that, in the month of July, he found icebergs and almost perpetual day. Then, impeded by the ice, he sailed to the south, until he reached the latitude of the straits of Gibraltar and the same longitude as the island of Cuba. This would correspond with the location of Chesapeake bay. He found people covered with the skins of wild animals, and he called the land Baccalaos because of the fish he found there. And he found "in maner continuall daylight." On the 22nd day of June the sun is visible during the entire twenty-four hours in latitude 65° 43′. In latitude 60°, at the entrance to Hudson straits, the sun would be above the horizon for something over nineteen hours, and the short night would be clear.

The famous Giambaptista Ramusio, who wrote a narrative history of early voyages, in the preliminary discourse, and writing under date of

June 22, 1553, makes the following statement: "As many years past it was written unto me by Signor Sebastian Cabot, our Venetian countryman, a man of great experience, and very rare in the art of navigation and the knowledge of cosmographie, who sailed along and beyond this land of New France, at the charge of King Henry the seventh of England. And he advertised me that, having sailed a long time West, and by North beyond those islands unto the latitude of 67 degrees and a half, under the North Pole, and at the 11th day of June, finding still open sea, without any maner of impediment, he thought verily of that way to have passed on still the way to Cathaia, which is the East, and would have done it, if the mutinie of the shipmarkers and mariners had not hindered him and made him to returne homewards from that place." Some writers make this account refer to the supposed voyage of Sebastian Cabot in 1516 or 1517. I do not believe such a voyage ever occurred, for several reasons, one of which, in particular, I will shortly give. The land of new France was the country viewed by Jacques Cartier and others from 1534 to 1543, and which was taken possession of in the name of the French king, Francis I. This would corroborate the Cape Breton landfall theory, as the lands of new France were in that region, and Sebastian is made to say he sailed "along and beyond this land." If an early navigator failed to report a mutiny on board his ship, the historian was in duty bound to introduce it. It was recognized as an essential feature in the drama of navigation. Columbus, in his diary, wrote, two days before he saw land, "The crew complained of the long voyage," and Washington Irving, in his life of Columbus, proceeded to indict every man for mutiny. There is no contemporaneous authority for the story of the mutiny on Cabot's ship.

Ramusio has recorded the story of Sebastian Cabot, as told to the gentleman from Mantua. This, too, was translated into English, and appears in Hakluyt. The anonymous Mantuan gentleman is supposed to be speaking:

"Doe you not vnderstand, sayd hee (speaking to certaine Gentlemen of Venice), how to passe to India toward the Northwest winde, as did of late a citizen of Venice, so valiant a man, and so well practised in all things pertaining to Nauigations and the science of Cosmographie, that at this present hee hath not his like in Spaine, insomuch that for his virtues he is preferred aboue all other pilots that saile to the West Indies, who may not pass thither without his licence, and is, therefore, called Piloto Maggiore (that is), the grand Pilot. And, when we said that wee knew him not, he proceeded, saying that, being certaine yeeres in the city of Siuil, and desirous to haue some knowledge of the Nauigations of the Spaniards, it was told him that there was in the citie a valiant man, a Venetian borne, named Sebastian Cabot, who had the charge of those things, being an expert man in that science, and one that could make

Cardes for the Sea with his owne hand, and that by this report, seeking his acquaintance, he found him a very gentle person, who intertained him friendly, and shewed him many things, and, among other a large mappe of the world, with certaine particuler nauigations, as well of the Portingals, as of the Spaniards, and that he spake further vnto him in this effect." From this part on Sebastian is speaking:

"When my father departed from Venice many yeeres since to dwell in England, to follow the trade of merchandises, he tooke me with him to the citie of London, while I was very yong, yet hauing nevertheless some knowledge of letters of humanitie, and of the Sphere. And when my father died in that time when newes were brought that Don Christopher Colonus Genuese, had discouered the coasts of India, whereof was great talke in all the court of King Henry the 7, who then raigned, insomuch that all men with great admiration affirmed it to be a thing more diuine than humane to saile by the West into the East where spices growe, by a way that was neuer knowen before, by this fame and report there increased in my heart a great flame of desire to attempt some notable thing. And vnderstanding by reason of the Sphere that if I should saile by way of the Northwest winde I should by a shorter tract come into India, I thereupon caused the king to be aduertised of my deuise, who immediately caused two caruels to bee furnished with all things appertayning to the voiage, which was, as farre as I remember, in the yeere 1496, in the beginning of Sommer. I began therefore to saile toward the Northwest, not thinking to find any other land than that of Cathay, and from thence to turne toward India, but after certaine dayes I found that the land ranne towards the North, which was to me a great displeasure. Neuerthelesse, sailing along by the coast to see if I could find any gulfe that turned, I found the lande still continent to the 56. deg. vnder our pole. And seeing that there the coast turned toward the East, despairing to find the passage, I turned backe againe, and sailed downe by the coast of that land toward the equinoctiall (euer with intent to find the said passage to India) and came to that part of this firme land which is now called Florida, where my victuals failing, I departed from thence and returned into England, where I found great tumults among the people, and preparation for warres in Scotland: by reason whereof there was no more consideration had to this voyage. Whereupon I went into Spaiene, to the catholike king, and Queene Elizabeth, which being aduertised what I had done, intertained me, and at their charges furnished certaine ships, wherewith they caused me to saile to discouer the coasts of Brasile, where I found an exceeding great and large riuer, named at this present, Rio de la plata, that is, the riuer of silver, into which I sailed and followed it into the firme land, more than sixe score leagues, finding it euery where very faire, and inhabitated with infinite people, which with admiration came running dayly to our ships. Into this riuer runne so many other riuers, that it is a maner incredible.

"After this I made many other voiages, which I now pretermit, and waxing old, I giue myself to rest from such trauels, because there are nowe many yong and lustie Pilots and mariners of good experience, by whose forwardnesse I do reioyce in the fruits of my labours, and rest with the charge of this office, as you see."

Sebastian Cabot is here made to declare that his father died in or about the year 1493, in the early spring of which year Columbus brought back the news of his discovery. The two public royal grants disclose the falseness of this statement. But, if the son was trying to appropriate the glory of the father, it was more natural, or, perhaps, you will say, more unnatural for him to make his father die before the expedition was conceived than to share with him in the fame of its success. We have three statements from Sebastian Cabot,—the first given by the historian, Peter Martyr, his familiar friend, and published at the time it was made, in which he makes no mention of his father, and in which he does claim to have directed an expedition from a point far north in the new world to a point near our Chesapeake bay. At this period Sebastian was about forty years of age and in high office in Spain. In the second statement, made directly to Ramusio by letter but many years previous to 1553, Sebastian does not mention his father, but does claim to have made a voyage "along and beyond this land of New France," into a latitude of 67½ degrees. In the third statement, made to the Mantuan gentleman, Sebastian distinctly declares that his father died in 1493, and that he made the voyage of discovery and coasted from a region far north, at least 56 degrees, and, perhaps 67½ degrees, as declared in the second statement, to a region southward, toward the equinoctial, to that part of the firm land which is now called Florida. This last statement was made when Cabot was an old man. Nowhere, and at no period of his life, does he acknowledge the part his father bore in the discovery. The grandson of Columbus brought suit against the crown of Spain to establish certain family rights, and on the 31st day of December, 1535, Sebastian Cabot testifies that he did not know, of his own knowledge, if the mainland extended north from Florida to the region called Baccalaos. This is a public record, and no gentleman from Mantua can take away its weight. I have always thought this testimony partially corroborative of Cabot's claim to have gone as far south as the parallel of the straits of Gibraltar. He was called as an expert witness, it being evidently thought he knew the entire country. He could not say he had been as far south as 25°, but he might have said he came within 11° of it, or to Chesapeake bay.

The last document we are to consider is the famous "Cabot map." It was what geographers call a planisphere, or a globe projected on a flat surface. It contains, like many of the earlier maps, legends descriptive of the various parts of the globe. These legends are given first in Span-

ish and then in Latin. Across the map, in the region of Hudson straits, is legend No. 8, in Spanish, which reads as follows:

"This land was discovered by Juan Cabot, a Venetian, and by Sebastian Cabot, his son, in the year of the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, 1494, on the 24th of June, in the morning, to which they gave the name of 'First Land Seen' (*Prima Tierra Vista*); and to a large island which is situated along the said land they gave the name San Juan, because it had been discovered the same day. The people of it are dressed in skins of animals. They use in their wars bows and arrows, lances and darts, and certain clubs of wood, and slings. It is a very sterile land. There are in it many white bears, and very large stags, of the size of horses, and many other animals; and likewise there is infinite fish."

The Latin version of the legend agrees in the main with the Spanish, except that the 24th day of July, instead of June, is given as the day of discovery, and the specific hour of five o'clock in the morning is mentioned, instead of "early in the morning," as in the Spanish. In both legends the year of discovery is 1494; in the Spanish it is written in Roman numerals, in the Latin it is written in Arabic numerals. The four is made by writing four straight lines, as on the face of a watch. It is thought that the hand which inscribed the Roman numerals intended to make a V or five, but left the first two lines separated. At all events, no one seriously contends that the year of discovery should be 1494 instead of 1497. There is but one copy of this map known, and that is preserved in the National Library in Paris. In 1549 an English reproduction of the map was made by Clement Adams, copies of which, says Hakluyt in his 1589 edition, were to be found in the "privie gallerie at Westminster and in many other ancient merchants houses." Hakluyt in this same 1589 edition quotes the date of the discovery recorded in the map as 1494, but in his subsequent edition of 1599 he corrects the date to 1497. No copy of this map exists to-day. In the region now known as Cape Breton Island are the three Spanish words, *Prima tierra vista.* Close to the land is an island named St. John. The geographers have been puzzled to reconcile the position of this island with the statement of Sebastian Cabot regarding its discovery and its baptism on St. John the Baptist's day. John Cabot nowhere refers to this island or to St. John the Baptist's day. These things are mentioned for the first time in the map of 1544, as it is certain the Bristol chronicle was composed long after this date. If the landfall was on Cape Breton, the only large island which could possibly be Cabot's St. John would be Prince Edward Island, and that would be nearly 130 miles from the landfall. The account says the island was seen and named the day of the landfall, and no ship in those days could have made 130 miles in the sixteen hours of daylight. Accepting the map and considering it by itself, one would seem justified in calling Cape Breton the site of the first landfall, and in accepting St. John the Baptist's day,

or the 24th of June, as the day of discovery. Considered in the light of documents and public papers contemporaneous with the event, this landfall does not seem possible. Not only was John Cabot deliberately seeking a point far north of Cape Breton, not only do the reports show he sailed toward that point and purposely mapped a course on a short circle, but nearly all the early maps showed the first Cabotian discoveries near the 60th degree of latitude. It is evident that the printed documents—Peter Martyr's account, Ramusio's story, and the map of 1544—all confound and include the two Cabotian voyages made respectively in 1497 and 1498. I do not believe that Sebastian Cabot made any subsequent voyages to the northeast coast of America. There is a passage in Peter Martyr's "Decades," immediately following the account I have read you, in which he uses the words: "Some Spaniards deny that Cabot was the first finder of the Baccalaos, and affirm that he went not so far westward." His own adopted countrymen likewise suspected him. You will remember we found England toward the close of the fifteenth century a country of artificers. Trades were well defined, and each had its own organization, guild or corporation, until they grew and developed into the twelve great livery companies of London. In March, 1521, Henry VIII. proposed to Sebastian Cabot that he should lead an expedition, and the twelve companies were expected to contribute toward the expense. The important Drapers' Company protested to king and council against the proposed expedition, and used these words:

"We thynk it were to sore avent'r to joperd V shipps wt men and goods unto the said Iland (the newe found land) uppon the singular trust of one man, callud, as we understand, Sebastuan, which Sebastyan, as we here say, was nevr in that land hymself, all if he makes reports of many things as he hat heard his father and other men speke in tymes past." Such words as these would not have been officially used if Sebastian had made the voyage of 1516 or 1517, and it is hard to believe such a charge would have been made by a responsible corporation if it were a matter of public notoriety that Sebastian had made the voyages.

The outlook we have obtained ought to disclose two distinct voyages made by John Cabot—the first sailing from Bristol in one ship in 1497, between the beginning of May and the beginning of August, discovering land near Hudson straits; the second leaving Bristol in the spring of 1498, and exploring the northeast coast from above the 60th parallel of north latitude, along the entire coast of the present Canada and the coast of our own Canada down to the region of Chesapeake bay.

And now with abounding patience you have followed me in a historical inquiry over a region as cold and sterile as the coast of Labrador. We have picked our way through great ice-fields of doubt, and drifted with currents of speculation and uncertainty. But there is one spot on which we stand, with a green field beneath our feet and over our head

the light of perpetual day. An English ship first ploughed the waters which wash the north coast of America. English feet first trod the island and the mainland. English hands first planted a national ensign on this part of the new world! It matters not if the leader's name be John or Sebastian! It matters not if he be of Venice or of Bristol! It matters not if one portion of the land was first seen in 1497 and another in 1498! The flag that was first fixed in the earth of North America was an English flag. The manual which gave warrant and protection to men and to ship was the signet of an English king. And this territory was not Labrador alone, but the land to the south; the land of Newfoundland and of Acadie; the New England coast and the shores of the middle states, and the land that drinks of the Chesapeake bay. And the title to all this goodly territory runs from ocean to ocean. And this land belongs to English-speaking people forever.

The dream of a king leadeth to foolishness. The fortunes of a people are ordered in heaven. The seventh Henry dreamed of an eastern country, of its spice and precious stones. His vision was Cathay, its fulfilment is America. In Cathay men still bow down to wooden gods. In America men worship a living God. The civilization of Europe, amended and improved, is ours. Cathay sits throned in superstition. In Cathay famine stalks, a familiar figure. Peace and plenty abide in America. In Cathay the individual drags a chain. In America the light of freedom falls upon his forehead. In Cathay the precious stone is uncut and imperfect. In America every face of the gem shines like a star. In Cathay the odour of the spice dies on the air. In America the fragrance of liberty perfumes the world. In Cathay a wall shuts in its people. In America the brotherhood of man is marching to and fro with open banners.

"Better fifty years of Europe
Than a cycle of Cathay."

LETTER OF HENRY VII. TO PHILIP OF BURGUNDY, KING OF CASTILE [1506].

(Rendered and translated by Reverend E. G. Porter, A.M.)

Mon bon filz | a vous de fort bon cueur Je me Recō
mande | Jay Receu voz lettres escriptes de vostre
main a buenavente [Benavente] du dernier de Juny et par
quelles mespriment | par le double du dernier trai
ctie fait entre vous | et le Roy vostre beaupere
J entend de vostre bonne umoy [umor] et concorde | de
quoy veritablement suys tresioreulx | et me
semble que voz amiz vse de tresgrande prudence
Et J apparcoiz bien que ledict traictie est grandement
a vostre honneur et louenge | esperant que beau
cop de meilleurs choses sen ensuyueront en
ladictueuir | Et Je suys trés grandement console de
veoir que par vostre sceur et bonne discression vous
auez mis voz affaires depardela en bonne paci
fficacion | au gre et contentement du Roy vostre
dit beaupere | et de touz les grands princes et
aultres voz subiectz depardela | et en les bien
traictant | ce vous donnera toujiours occasion
de longuement prosperer | et de bien en quoy
myeulx contynuer | ce que de ma part je de
sire singulierement || Je vous ay advertez par aultres
mes brefs de la registre qui ma fait naymes vostre
lieuctenant generall pour voz affaires depardeza
et les choses que luy ay offert faire en vostre absence
pour vous complaire et faire plaisir | come a mon
bon et cordial filz | Et a tant vous diz adieu que
mon bon filz vous domt ce que vostre cueur desire
A Richemont | le xxiii jour de Jullet de la main
de vostre bon frere cousin et bon pere

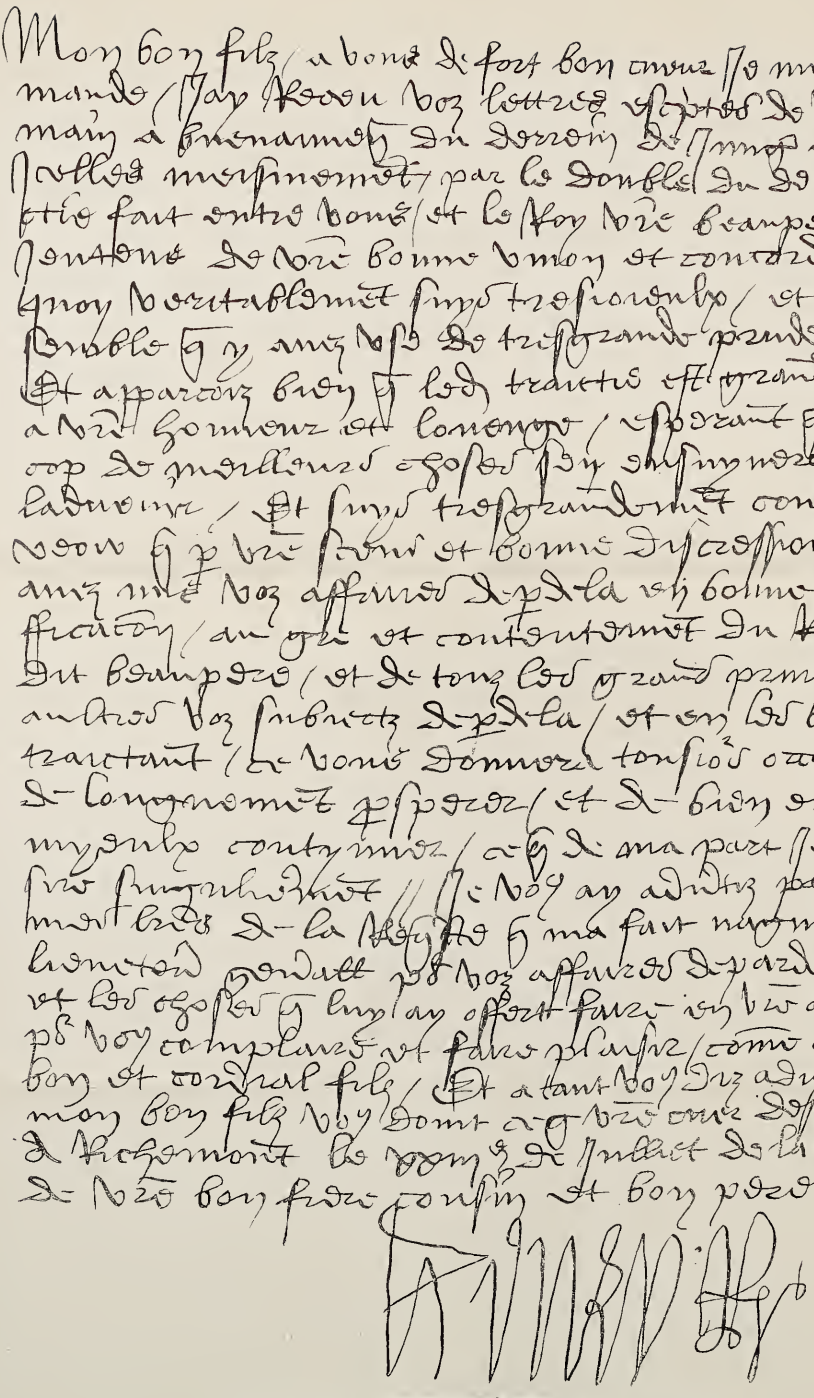
HENRY REX.

TRANSLATION.

My good son. With a good heart I recommend myself to you. I have received your letters written in your hand at Benavente of the last of June by which they explain to me in double about the last treaty made between you and the king your father-in-law. I hear of your good feeling and concord for which I am very happy, and it seems to me that your friends use great prudence and I also perceive that the said treaty is greatly to your honour and praise hoping that many better things will follow in the same direction. And I am very greatly consoled to see that by your sure and good discretion you have put your affairs there in good peace to the satisfaction and contentment of the king, your said father-in-law and of all the great princes and others your subjects there and in treating them well that will give you always occasion long to prosper and what is better continuously which for my part I desire singularly. I have advised you by others of my briefs from the registrar who has named me your lieutenant general for your affairs here, and the things that may offer themselves to be done in your absence to oblige you and give you pleasure as to my good and cordial son. And now adieu. May my good son give you what your heart desires.

At Richmond the 23d day of July by the hand of your good brother cousin and good father.

HENRY REX.



AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF HENRY VII.

(From the original in the possession of Hon. John Boyd Thacher of Albany.) Written at Richmond, 23 July [1506], addressed, "A mon bon fils le Roy de Castille." This was Philip of Burgundy who married Joanna of Castile, and became the father of Charles V. Henry and Philip were intimate friends, and called one another father and son.